SPN, any angels, we used to be family

PG, Gabriel + Raphael, AU of S5 set just after Castiel and Dean left Raphael in that fire-ring. 500~ words of Gabriel character study, yay! \o/

He can't help but think of himself as a moth, and he can't help but think of all the reasons he shouldn't be here.

He's helpless to resist the urge that brings him here, though, and so here Gabriel is: standing before a ring of fire, listening to the rain fall outside as he watches his brother stand as still as a statue in the center of the fire.

It's oddly peaceful, for a moment: the rain is the only sound, and the fire is the only movement.

Then understanding flashes across Raphael's eyes, and fear strikes at Gabriel when Raphael moves, surging forward, voice rising with fury, and sheer instinctual terror makes Gabriel step back.

But Raphael stops at the line of the fire, and then he looks nothing more than human, and weary.

"...Raphael." Gabriel greets, then falls into silence when Raphael raises his eyes to meet his own.

Raphael doesn't need to say anything to make Gabriel understand that he is angry, he is tired, he is without hope and that Gabriel can't change anything.

For a moment Gabriel has nothing to say.

"You shouldn't be here." Raphael says.

"It's the other way around, actually," Gabriel says, and he is grateful for the Trickster, for learning how to talk back when all of his basic instincts are to be quiet and obey.

Millennia of denying those instincts hasn't made them vanish, after all, and the presence of another angel makes it harder to deny them.

(After all these years - is Raphael higher in the hierarchy than he is, now? If he took back his role, would he still have rank to pull?)

"Lucifer is walking," Raphael says. "The vessels are alive. It's time we were down here."

"It's not," Gabriel says, and is all too aware of how the only thing between him and Raphael is that fire.

"Traitor," Raphael says after a long moment, the venom fresh in his voice. "I

should strike you down."

"We used to be family, you know," is all Gabriel can say.

"You aren't my brother," Raphael says, every inch of him discarding weariness for fury. "You are a - "

"Coward, traitor, not worthy to be an angel, tainted - did I miss anything?"

"You should be dead."

"I'm not."

"I'm going to fix that."

"Not when you're trapped like that you're not."

They're silent again, and Gabriel has to fight with himself not to show fear, or shame - he cast all that aside when he claimed the first sacrifice to Loki as his own.

He reminds himself of this, and he reminds himself of the promises he made to Odin, to Kali, to the assembled Aesir when they realized that Loki didn't have wings...

"I'm not going to help you, Raphael," Gabriel says at last. "Or try to repent or do anything to get myself back in Heaven's good graces. So feel free to be angry at me."

He moves closer to the circle, staring death - his brother - in the face.

"I'm going to stop this. I don't want an apocalypse, and no one else on Earth does. You'd know that if you lived here."

He spits on the ground, and walks out, ignoring whatever Raphael says in response, listening to the rain instead.